

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Fishbein and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am from Granby and a supporter of CT Against Gun Violence. I am horrified by the number of people who have lost someone to gun violence, when they should not have had access to a gun.

Connecticut was the first state in the nation to pass an Extreme Risk Protection Order law, in 1999. It offers a means of last resort, with due process protections, to temporarily remove firearms from individuals judged to be at risk of imminent harm to themselves or others. It has been shown to prevent firearm suicide and stop mass shootings. It is time to strengthen the law so that it works harder to prevent gun violence. In particular, when the protection order expires, it should be a requirement that the subject is no longer at risk of violence before the firearms are returned. That is not the case now.

Because there are often warning signs preceding violent or suicidal behavior this last-resort measure with due process protections is an effective tool for reducing gun violence. An FBI study of the pre-attack behaviors of active shooters found on average they displayed four to five observable and concerning behaviors that suggested the possibility of violent intentions. And because firearm suicide accounts for up to two-thirds of gun deaths and is the second leading cause of suicide in Connecticut, there is an urgent need to strengthen our ERPO law to help it save more lives.

I ask that you favorably report HB-6355 out of committee so that the General Assembly can vote to strengthen our Extreme Risk Protection law so that it works harder to prevent firearm suicide and homicide. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ellen A Thomson

Granby, CT